



NORDIC MAGIC ON A PLATE — HUNT FOR WILD HERBS IN FINLAND

With some of the cleanest air and water in the world, Finland offers a rare kind of luxury: pure nature, even in cities, rich with edible treasures.

From spring through autumn, nature presents a special treat: wild herbs. Delicate, aromatic and worthy of fine dining, just waiting to be picked.

On the hunt for wild herbs

[Anna Nyman](#) has spent the past ten years guiding curious locals and visitors through Helsinki's parks and forests, helping people rediscover the wild herbs growing all around them.

"Learning about wild herbs felt like discovering a lost secret. They blew my mind," she says. "In the old days, every Finnish farmhouse used wild herbs — for both cooking and healing. That knowledge has been passed down through generations."

What makes Finnish herbs truly special is the environment they grow in. "Plants in the north need to survive dark, cold winters. Then in spring, there's a sudden burst of light. It's a strange climate, and plants have to adapt. They become resilient — just like the people," Nyman says as she smiles. "That resilience makes northern herbs richer in flavor and nutrients than their southern cousins."

Foraging season runs from late April to the first snowfall. In spring, early herbs are mild and easy for beginners. Summer brings flowers and bold aromas, and in autumn, it's time to gather seeds, roots and leaves. Wild herbs can be enjoyed raw, cooked or dried, and even fine-dining restaurants have discovered them. You might spot spruce, pine or juniper on the menu in Finland, thanks to their truly unique aromas.

Many herbs also have medicinal properties. Chickweed, for instance, is known to reduce swelling and cool the body on hot summer days. Herbs are often used in cosmetics too, and, of course, in the sauna. Birch is the traditional choice for sauna whisks, but Nyman likes to mix in nettle.

Nyman encourages beginners to join a guided tour, especially since some plants in Finnish nature are toxic. But foraging doesn't require any equipment or previous experience, nor does it mean hiking deep into the wilderness. In fact, wild herbs are often found near urban areas.

"In Finland, nature is never far. It's something people can even do quickly after work — wandering, watching and tasting."

The Everyman's Rights

In Finland, everyone is free to benefit from nature's pantry. The law guarantees your right to roam and pick wild herbs, berries and mushrooms almost anywhere. This is known as *Everyman's Right* — or *Jokamiehenoikeudet* in Finnish — and it allows anyone, including visitors, to enjoy nature freely. You can forage, walk and even fish with a simple rod and line, all without needing permission. Just remember that with these rights comes the responsibility to respect nature and treat it with care.

Restaurants gone wild

You don't have to forage yourself to taste wild flavors. Finnish restaurants craft imaginative dishes with seasonal, natural ingredients that highlight their unique flavors. The chef may have even foraged the herbs on your plate that very morning from a nearby forest, because in Finland, there's always one close by.

Below are a few restaurants that will take your taste buds on a culinary trip to the wild side.

- [Restaurant Skörd](#) in Helsinki takes their dedication to local ingredients so seriously that they even forgo peppercorns. You won't miss them though as aromatic herbs, meticulous cooking methods and the pure intensity of Nordic produce pack a punch of flavor. Try the wine list, as well, and let Finnish berry wines surprise you.
- Local, seasonal ingredients define the menu at the prestigious Turku [restaurant Kaskis](#). Chefs Erik and Simo often head into nearby nature themselves, foraging wild herbs and transforming them into creative Nordic fine dining.
- [Restaurant Kielo](#) is a hidden gem in Joensuu, a town surrounded by forests and the beautiful Lake Saimaa. Their 9-course set menu takes you on a delightful taste journey through Finland, celebrating northern flavors.
- For something truly unique, dine deep in the woods. [Wild Out](#) hosts three-course wilderness lunches amidst the pristine landscapes of Kuusamo in Northern Finland. Carefully prepared wild food tastes even more delicious when enjoyed outdoors by a campfire.

PHOTOS

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